News Releases - 2007

Canada Council launches 50 for 50 Arts Challenge web site

Ottawa, June 13, 2007 – The 50 for 50 Arts Challenge – which asks Canadians to participate in 50 arts activities in 2007 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts – has gone high tech.

The new 50 for 50 Arts Challenge web site allows Canadians to share their arts experiences and gain inspiration from the experiences of others. Users can create individual profiles, track their progress by posting their activities to the site, and engage in discussion about any aspect of the arts.

The site also tracks which activities are most popular, as well as the most common categories of activities, known as "tags". As of this month, the most popular tag is "poetry", followed by "Canadian" and "music". Some of the more popular activities include "take lots of pictures on my digital camera", "read a non-fiction book by a Canadian author", and "visit a local gallery at lunch time".

The site also features regular posts from special guest bloggers Kim Barlow and Paul Savoie. Barlow, a singer/songwriter based in Whitehorse, says of the local arts scene: "There are a lot of arts events going on around here and a lot of them are unusual, exceptional, wonderful, and set in the great context of the North. The regional isolation and sparse population lends a sense of urgency to events here – we're lucky it's happening at all, and we can't afford to get too complacent." Paul Savoie, a French-language writer based in Toronto and author of nearly 30 books, shares his personal reflections on what the arts mean to him: "Art is my life. It's what gives meaning to everything I do and everything I am."

Inspired by the success of 43things.com – where users create a list of 43 things they would like to do with their life – the 50 for 50 Arts Challenge site encourages everyone, young and old, to step up their involvement in the arts.

"I must admit I am not an arts person," says one user known as "GeekyCoder", "but with time I am getting more and more interested." Participants are not finding it difficult to integrate the arts into their lives. Another user says: "It's really amazing when you start to reflect on what you do in your spare time just how many activities are artistic and creative."

Citing activities like "sing along with my CD in the car", and "find more books to read with my son", some of the more active users are more than halfway to the goal of 50 activities…and could even reach 100 or more.

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